

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 15731

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GW

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT

1. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT TOOK ME ASIDE AT THE CONCLUSION OF LAST EVENING'S CONCERT IN BONN OF THE ISRAELI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, THE SECOND HALF OF WHICH HE ATTENDED. NOTING THAT HE HAD SPOKEN WITH THE PRESIDENT ON THE TELEPHONE EARLIER IN THE DAY, HE SAID HE WANTED TO REPEAT ONCE AGAIN HOW DISTRESSED HE WAS PERSONALLY AT THE ATTEMPTED SHOOTING OF THE PRESIDENT IN CALIFORNIA. HE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR GERMANS TO UNDERSTAND HOW SUCH THINGS COULD HAPPEN, AND HE COULD ONLY SUPPOSE THAT TWO SUCCESSIVE ATTEMPTS ON THE PRESIDENT'S LIFE IN SUCH A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME COULD ONLY HAVE COME AS A GREAT SHOCK TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. HE HOPED THAT, AS A RESULT, IMPROVED PROTECTIVE MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN. HE COULD UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT WISH TO INSULATE HIMSELF COMPLETELY FROM THE POPULATION. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE CONTINUED, ABSOLUTE SECURITY FOR PUBLIC FIGURES WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE GOAL, POINTING TO HIS OWN RELATIVELY EXPOSED POSITION IN THE HALL AS WE WERE TALKING.

2. HE THEN RAISED THE SUBJECT OF HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. SOMEWHAT TO MY SURPRISE, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE DID NOT SEEM AS WELL INFORMED ON THE PLANS BEING

DEVELOPED AS HIS PRESS SPOKESMAN PRESUMABLY HAD BEEN EARLIER IN THE DAY (REPORTED IN BONN 15700). SCHMIDT EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE WITHOUT TOO MUCH DISTURBANCE IN VIEW OF EMPEROR HIROHITO'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. I COMMENTED THAT THE MATTER WAS BEING HANDLED IN WASHINGTON, BUT I ASSUMED, IN VIEW OF THE PRESS REPORTS COMING FROM THERE AS WELL AS THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN BONN, THAT THE SUBJECT WAS IN HAND.

3. THE CHANCELLOR WENT ON TO SAY THAT HIS PRINCIPAL TOPIC OF CONVERSATION WOULD BE GISCARD'S PROPOSAL FOR A SUMMIT MEETING AND RELATED MATTERS. HE SAID HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT, AFTER SOME INITIAL RESISTANCE, THE UNITED STATES WAS COMING AROUND TO THE IDEA THAT SUCH A SUMMIT MIGHT SERVE A USEFUL PURPOSE. HE WAS NOT ENTIRELY SURE HIMSELF, SINCE POPULAR EXPECTATIONS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE AROUSED THAT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MEET IN TERMS OF CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENTS WHICH COULD BE ANNOUNCED. POLITICIANS AND PUBLICS HAVE NOT ACCEPTED THE IDEA THAT AN AIRING OF PROBLEMS AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION, WHICH MIGHT HELP TO CLARIFY THINKING, COULD BE USEFUL AT THE SUMMIT LEVEL WITHOUT MOMENTOUS AGREEMENTS NECESSARILY BEING REACHED. IN ANY EVENT, HE GATHERED THAT THE MOMENTUM WAS NOW BEGINNING TO PICK UP FOR SUCH A MEETING. HE NOTED THAT THE SUGGESTION HAD BEEN MADE THAT IT MIGHT BE HELD IN GERMANY, BUT HE WAS INCLINED TO THINK THAT PARIS WAS PROBABLY THE BEST SITE. THIS WOULD GIVE A BOOST TO GISCARD'S PRESTIGE, AND HE STILL BELIEVED IT DESIRABLE THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE TO STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF THE FRENCH PRESIDENT. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, HE OBSERVED, WAS TO HAVE THE MEETING IN CANADA IF THE CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER WERE TO BE INCLUDED.

4. COMMENT: THE FACT THAT THE CHANCELLOR APPEARED FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE ISRAELI CONCERT, DESPITE OBVIOUS WEARINESS, SHOWED ONCE AGAIN HOW GERMANS OF HIS GENERATION ARE PREPARED TO GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR CONTINUING FEELING OF OBLIGATION TOWARDS

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ISRAEL. AS FAR AS I AM AWARE, THIS IS THE FIRST PUBLIC MUSICAL EVENT OF THE KIND WHICH SCHMIDT HAS ATTENDED SINCE HE BECAME CHANCELLOR.

HILLENBRAND

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